

August 12, 2007

Delegation of Authority, Chippy Creek Fire

We welcome you and your Team to the Chippy Creek Fire and wish you a safe and successful assignment.

We hereby delegate authority for the management of the Chippy Creek Wildland Fire incident to you as Incident Commander. This fire is burning on lands under the jurisdiction and/or protection responsibility of the Northwest Land Office, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), the Lolo National Forest (LNF), and the Flathead Agency and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The fire has burned and is burning on private lands and on lands owned by Plum Creek Timber Company and Stoltz Land and Lumber. The fire is burning in Sanders and Flathead Counties (see attached map). Sanders and Flathead Counties and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Flathead Agency, Montana have responsibility for public safety and structural fire protection on private property and should be represented in the incident management organization, and included in strategic planning, and tactical activities as appropriate. It is paramount that close coordination with the State of Montana, Department of Natural Resources, the Lolo National Forest, the Bureau of Indian Affairs/Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and your Incident Management Team be established immediately to ensure a safe transfer of command. Additionally, we expect you to maintain close working relationships with the local and tribal law enforcement, Sanders County, and the Tribal Disaster and Emergency Services organizations in their continued involvement in this complex incident.

You will assume command of the incident from the current IC, Larry Raley, at 0600 on Monday, August 13, 2007. Steve Frye (DNRC) and Debbie Austin (LNF), and Debbie DuMontier (BIA/CS&KT) or their designated representatives, will be available for daily review of the WFSA. Your cost limitation for this incident is \$ 10,000,000. If during review and implementation of the selected alternative it appears the costs will exceed this amount, we will revisit the WFSA and cost limitation and will revise either or both and submit the revision(s) for approval by the Forest Supervisor, BIA Acting Superintendent, and DNRC Line Officer.

Randy Hojem, Plains District Ranger, is the designated LNF agency representative for Debbie Austin. In the event that Randy is not available, John Errecat will act on his behalf. Shawn Thomas, Trust Lands Program Manager is the designated DNRC representative for Steve Frye. Tony Harwood or his designee will serve as the designated representative for Debbie DuMontier, Acting Superintendent, Flathead Agency, Montana.

The principal objectives to be accomplished through your management of the Chippy Creek Fire include:

1. Firefighter and public safety is the highest priority for you and everyone on or working for your incident management team. All aspects of your operation should include a safety analysis that identifies and evaluates each action for every operational period. This safety analysis must be documented for each operational period. Use of the ICS-215A or similar is acceptable. Please include the following operational elements and their associated safety factors in your analysis and mitigation planning; the development of tactics commensurate with available resources, contingency planning for anticipated as well as unanticipated fire growth and changing conditions and the need to rapidly adjust tactics accordingly (even if that means disengagement), management steps to avoid or minimize fatigue, assuring that the span-of-control is appropriate to the assignment, ensuring that general and assignment specific safety briefings occur prior to engagement and as conditions or assignments change throughout the operational period, monitoring and ensuring personnel well being and care, providing timely and accurate information exchange, etc. The DNRC, Lolo National Forest, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes expect that the Ten Standard Orders will be adhered to by every firefighter, without compromise, and that the Eighteen Watch-Out Situations will be continually evaluated and mitigated before any action is undertaken in the fire environment. If you cannot mitigate a tactical hazard don't implement the corresponding tactical action.
2. We expect you and your team to implement a suppression strategy that utilizes point protection, direct, and indirect attack to limit fire spread to the north and south of the Chippy Creek and Bear Creek drainages respectively and west of the Thompson River Road. This strategy recognizes the need to check the fire's spread on the Flathead Indian Reservation to protect private property, structures, and other valuable resources. Pursue weather, natural barrier, and terrain opportunities to safely establish containment and control lines within the boundaries of the WFSA's Selected Alternative, and minimize the suppression-related impacts to protect the cultural, commercial timberland, and other natural resources and improvements that are present within the fire area. When planning and implementing firing operations consider fire regime and condition class. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes expect all suppression operations to be conducted in accordance with the WFSA selected strategy, objectives and other direction listed in IMT briefing packages. In the event that this strategy cannot be achieved within the acreage contained within the WFSA selected alternative or cost limitation, we will review and revise as appropriate; in coordination with your team, the selected alternative and the associated suppression strategy. The WFSA's Selected Alternative identifies the rationale for the appropriate suppression management response specific to this incident. All questions concerning potential natural and cultural resource impacts related to your strategic or tactical operations will be handled through the CS&KT assigned Agency Representative and other assigned Resource Advisors.
3. Work-rest guidelines for wildland firefighters must be adhered to. The incident commander and the command and general staff will be personally involved in planning, implementing, and monitoring compliance to provide a 2-for-1 work-to-rest ratio. Monitor cumulative fatigue, ensure all assigned firefighting personnel receive adequate rest, and any operational period in excess of 16 hours requires documentation along with measures initiated to reduce fatigue.

4. LNF considers minimum impact management tactics as the starting point for planning fire suppression activities in every case. Where opportunity and safety allow, direct attack the fire edge utilizing the appropriate tactics to minimize fire spread. Night operations need to be justified relative to the values at risk and fully mitigated to insure fire fighter safety. Do not drop retardant within 300 feet of streams or standing water, unless there is a threat to firefighter and/or public safety.
5. Coordinate with the Flathead Agency/CS&KT and Sanders and Flathead Counties to assure that the necessary steps are taken to prevent the fire from threatening or burning structures. Assist the Flathead Agency/CS&KT and Sanders and Flathead Counties with the development and implementation of an Evacuation Plan or Plans should such planning become necessary.
6. Jennifer Mickelson and Chris Partyka are designated to represent the LNF as resource advisors to your Team. The resource advisor and any technical specialists representing the LNF should be included in your Team's operational planning and decision-making activities as well as provided unrestricted, but coordinated access to the fireline and incident facilities. Their recommendations will be based on valid land management direction and biological evaluations and should be applied or mitigated in each case. Coordinate all fire related actions with the assigned Tribal Cultural Resource Advisors to minimize or eliminate all impacts associated with your tactical suppression operations.
7. Establish and monitor cost effective methods of accomplishing objectives. Keep cost effectiveness as an important part of your decision-making process, coordinate with the CS&KT FMO or Agency Representative, and the Flathead Agency Superintendent to complete the daily validation and/or update the WFSA, but do not compromise public, firefighter or aviation safety.
 - a. Use Appendix D of the Appropriate Management Response document to record your cost decisions.
 - i. Attach Appendix D cost factor matrix, with decisions documented, to the daily review of the WFSA.
 - ii. Document specifics of the decisions in relation to the cost factors in the daily IC summary.
 - iii. Document in the 209 the significant issues for values at risk/cost factors (blocks 28 & 29).
 - iv. Validate the WFSA review and cost factor decisions daily with your Agency Administrators or designees.
 - v. Ensure rationale for decisions is crystal clear to minimize misinterpretation.
 - b. Maintain total fire suppression costs within or below the 10 year average acre costs as identified in the WFSA. If costs cannot be maintained at or below those averages, document the reasons this cannot be accomplished and share this information with the IBA or designated Line Officer representative.
 - c. Property and equipment accountability standards must be followed according to State policy for DNRC's jurisdiction. The loss tolerance ratio that you are directed to achieve for accountable property is no more than 6%. You are also expected to track miscellaneous fire equipment to ensure that items delivered to drop points or locations on the fire line are accounted for and not misplaced or lost. You are expected to track

property loaned to cooperators and recover the property when the cooperator is demobilized from the incident.

8. Utilize the Forest Incident Business Management Guide to assist with business management decisions. For clarification or interpretation of any items contact the DNRC Incident Business Advisor, Glenda Rothacher and LNF Incident Business Advisor.

9. Your Incident Management Team will be responsible for providing the aviation response to initial attack actions within the temporary flight restriction (TFR) established for the Chippy Creek fire. The fire protection agencies (DNRC, CS&KT, LNF) will be responsible to provide the ground response to initial attack actions in their respective protection areas within the area encompassed by the Chippy Creek Fire TFR. Any new fire starts detected by or reported to your Incident Management Team should be reported to Plains Dispatch who will then notify the dispatch center for the Agency/Unit with protection responsibility for the fire. In all cases it is the responsibility of non incident resources (air and/or ground) responding to an initial attack within the Chippy Creek TFR to coordinate their actions with the Chippy Creek Incident Management Team. Any existing wildland fires on the Flathead Indian Reservation will remain the responsibility of Flathead Agency. The CS&KT Fire Management Officer and the Dispatcher will retain the authority and responsibility for coordinating all initial and extended attack suppression management actions on fires within their jurisdiction. The CS&KT Dispatcher as well as the DNRC, and LNF will coordinate with your IMT on requests for suppression assistance on any new wildland fires. Your Team, in coordination with the Incident Management Team assigned to the Brush Creek Incident, will also be asked to support a quick response module (configuration to be determined) as well as initial and extended attack with resources as requested and available, recognizing that successful initial attack is the top priority in the Northern Rockies after firefighter and public safety.

10. Personnel assigned to this incident must be sensitive to local residents by respecting individuals, private property and public interests. Your Team should utilize local services, vendors and contractors to support incident requirements to the maximum extent possible. Please include services, vendors, and contractors on the Flathead Reservation to support incident requirements to the maximum extent possible.

11. Precautions must be taken to prevent the introduction and subsequent spread of noxious weeds. This includes the pre-treatment and post-treatment of vehicles and helicopters utilized to support the incident. Specific to the LNF only, the LNF has implemented an Environmental Management System (EMS). As part of the EMS operational controls (conservation measures) for Fire Suppression, Fire Use, and Invasive Weeds Significant Aspect document (ISO 4.4.6) will be implemented to reduce the potential for noxious weed establishment and spread into the fire area.

- a. Off-Forest vehicles and equipment that will be used on forest roads or on the fireline will be cleaned at check-in and upon release from the incident. The cleaning shall consist of removing all dirt and plant parts from the equipment (including undercarriage) that may carry noxious weed seeds before entering the fire area. A weed washing log will be used to track the implementation of this conservation measure.
- b. All cargo nets used in sling load operation will be inspected for plant parts at time of service check at the helibase and dirt and plant parts removed before use. A Net Inspection Log is used to track the progress of this operation.
- c. The IMT Helibases touchdown pad and cargo area will be free of noxious weed flowering heads or cleaned of noxious weed flowering heads when such areas are established, or when practical. The IMT helibase(s) includes any existing helibases on a unit used during the fire incident or helibases established at the ICP.

Reference: Significant Aspect: Fire Suppression and Wildland Fire Use and Impact on Invasive Weeds Procedures, Operational Controls, Responsibilities, and Monitoring R1 National Forest/Grassland.

12. Media relations and public information management may be provided on-scene, but coordination with the DNRC, LNF, and CS&KT should occur through regular contact by your Team with Paula Rosenthal Fire Information Specialist, DNRC, Boyd Hartwig, LNF Public Information Officer, and Rich Janssen for the CS&KT.
13. The LNF, DNRC, and Flathead Agency/CS&KT encourage you to provide training opportunities to personnel assigned or available to this incident to assist in maintaining a well-qualified fire management workforce.
14. Rehabilitate fire suppression related damages in a timely manner. Resource advisors from the protection/jurisdictional Agency(s) will be available to assist with this planning. The LNF, Flathead Agency/CS&KT, and DNRC will assemble a burned area emergency rehabilitation team as soon as practical. Please coordinate with and assist the team in providing access to areas affected by the fire in a manner that does not compromise incident objectives or personnel safety.
15. The final fire package should follow the attached Northern Rockies Coordinating Group standard format and be demonstrated as meeting the standard to the agencies before close-out. Any items that are missing or incomplete should be listed on a separate document.

Again, welcome and be safe.

Deborah L. R. Austin
Forest Supervisor,
Lolo National Forest

Wally Bennett
Incident Commander,
Northern Rockies T-1 IMT

Debbie DuMontier
Acting Superintendent, Flathead Agency, Montana

Stephen J. Frye
Area Operations Manager, Montana
Department of Natural Resources &
Conservation